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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8688
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 1130
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0977
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1040
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 1383
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3381
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS OTTAWA 001407

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAN AND IRM/BPC/CST/EA GODWIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECPS](#) [ACAO](#) [AMGT](#) [ANET](#) [ECPS](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL IN CANADA

REF: STATE 92121

¶1. (U) Summary: Canada's emergency telecom systems consist of a priority access for dialing (also known as priority access to dial tone or PAD) system for landline phones and a wireless priority system (WPS) similar to the U.S. model. The dated PAD system offers little benefit to the Embassy. However, the GOC would welcome Mission Canada's participation in the WPS. End Summary.

LANDLINE PRIORITY

¶2. (SBU) Reftel requested information regarding potential means for post to communicate locally and with Washington in case of emergency and/or severe network overload. Christine Volonte, Project Officer, National Emergency Telecom Services, Industry Canada, told emboffs that Canada does not have an emergency "end-to-end" priority service for landline calls on par with the U.S. Government Emergency Telecom Service (GETS). Canada's emergency system provides Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal officials only with priority access to dial tone (PAD). Volonte noted that the Canadian and U.S. telecom systems are well integrated and use the same switching and routing. As a result, many Canadian officials, herself included, have U.S. GETS cards that give them access to the U.S. GETS system as long as they can get a call through to a U.S. system.

¶3. (SBU) The Canadian PAD system is not compatible with voice over internet protocol (VOIP), which is already used by several Canadian municipalities, including Vancouver, the host of the 2010 Olympics, Volonte said. She stated that the technology needed to prioritize certain VOIP data packets (particularly end-to-end) does not yet exist.

¶4. (SBU) Volonte believes that the Canadian PAD system would not be beneficial to post. She said even in times of severe stress on the Canadian telecom system, the Embassy's own communications arrangements would likely allow Embassy officials to obtain a dial tone due to the fact that we host our own PBX system and have digital (T-1) lines. Furthermore, she expects that the PAD system will eventually be phased out.

WIRELESS PRIORITY

¶5. (SBU) Canada's wireless priority service (WPS), according to Volonte, is identical to the WPS in the United States. The Canadian WPS does not offer end-to-end priority, but rather helps prioritize phone to cell tower communication during emergencies. The system is two years old, has less

than 1,000 subscribers, and is maintained by Rogers Wireless, a private company. A second company, MTS Allstream, has requested and been approved to offer WPS because they provide Canada-wide telecom services but have not yet offered the WPS service to customers. All domestic officials wishing to subscribe to WPS must apply through Industry Canada, and foreign officials must apply through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. WPS in Canada has issues identical to WPS in the United States regarding the use of 3G (HSPA) handsets and at this point in time 2G phones should be used to ensure access to WPS.

¶5. (U) Within the WPS, subscribers are separated into five levels of priority:

Level 1: Executive Leadership and Decision Makers
Level 2: Disaster Response and Military Command and Control
Level 3: Public Health and Safety and Law Enforcement Command
Level 4: Public Service, Utilities, and Public Welfare
QLevel 4: Public Service, Utilities, and Public Welfare
Level 5: Disaster Recovery

¶6. (SBU) Mission Canada officials, should they subscribe to WPS, would be assigned priority level 2. The subscription costs 10 CAD/month/phone and 1 CAD per minute of use.

¶7. (U) For additional information visit Industry Canada's site at www.ic.gc.ca and search for PAD.

Visit Canada,s Economy and Environment Forum at
<http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/canada>

WILKINS